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WILL N. ROGERS

COUNTRY EDITOR

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Will N. Rogers, Country Editor
Genealogy, newspaper career, recollections
obituary Pam.

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Author:

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B E G I N N I N G S

The name Rogers is said to be derived from the word "Kroud" in Frank. It has been claimed the name as is now written is from the French. This suggests that the English Rogers families went to England with William the Conqueror. If so, the family name originated in Normandy, France about 1031.

Thomas Rogers and his son Joseph came over in the Mayflower, but Thomas died soon after arrival. His other children came later and all settled in Plymouth. One moved to Connecticut.

One of these sons, James, was chosen to fill many important positions. He was deputy to the court of elections and representative to the general court seven times in about as many years. Governor Winthrop showed his esteem for him in many ways. For many years prior to 1666, James Rogers carried on by far the most extensive foreign and domestic trade of any man in New London.

The family line is rather indistinct for many years until the name of Robert Rogers, the celebrated "Ranger" appears, who did great service in the French and Indian wars. From the similarity of Christian annes and also by comparison of dates, it is reasonable to suppose this Robert Rogers is the man whose name is recorded in the records of the old Congregational church at Albany Vermont, along with the other ancestors of our branch of the Rogers family tree and thus is definitely identified as the head of the first generation recorded in Vermont. The date of his birth, marriage, name of his wife and death, is not recorded. It is inferred that, as an old man, he may have come

to Albany, Vermont, with his son Jesse Rogers and family, who are recorded as having arrived from Londonderry or Greenfield New Hampshire, in the spring of 1806.

Jesse Rogers was born in 1769 and died in 1836. Sarah Wiley, his wife, was born in 1770 and died in 1861.

This third generation's head was James Rogers, born at Albany, Vermont in 1779, married Nancy Chamberlain at Albany, on January 26,1831, by E. W. Kellogg, minister.

Nancy Chamberlain-Rogers' father was Joseph Chamberlain born at Royalton, Vermont, in 1777. He was three years of age when the town was burned by the Indians, October 16,1780. He was 21 years old when he came from Craftsbury to Albany and married Nancy Cushing at Bethel, Vermont. The record goes on to state-"he was a very handsome young man who wore his hair in a queue."

Nancy Cushing-Chamberlain was born in 1794, married at the age of 16 years and died July 2, 1868. Nancy Chamberlain-Rogers is buried at Oaklnd California.

The (15?) children of James and Nancy Chamberlain-Rogers were Rosamond, born March 2 1832, married the Reverend Nathan R. Johnson. Mrs. Johnson for many years engaged in home mission work among the Chinese in San Francisco and Oakland California. She is buried at Oakland.

Charles Carroll, born July 8,1833: Luther Belano, born July 8, 1835, burial place, Winthrop, Iowa: Mary, born June11,1836, married twice to Albert Tracy, who died in the South during the

Civil war, and Benjamin F. Ropes of Eldorado, Iowa. Mrs. Ropes died in the early eighties, burial place, West Union: Ruben F. born Oct. 17,1837, Abilene, burial place in Vermont: Joseph, buried at Bethel Iowa, cemetery near Alpha: Newell Chamberlain died in the South during the Civil war, buried at Soldiers National Cemetery, St. Louis, Mo: Almira married George F. Brockway, burial place, Bethel: Nancy, burial place North Branch, Minn: Sarah, buried at Eden Iowa cemetery: Augusta, married Albert W. Utter, buried at Bethel: James, went west in the eighties and all trace of him lost: Ephraim, buried at North Branch, Minn: Margaret Jane: married Ed Ostrander: the only surviving child, 70 years of age as this is written in 1926 and resides at West Union Iowa.

The father, James, died July 4, 1864, and is buried at Eden cemetery, The is without a marker, located down the main aisle of the cemetery.

Leaves from the Life of a Country Editor, by Will N. Rogers

My Newspaper Career

My newspaper career--the only career I ever had--began in 1886. That year I entered the employ of J. Snare Detwiler and Homer P. Branch, who were publishers of the Waucoma "Vox Populi."

Mr. Branch says he reached out of the office door as I was passing, grabbed me by the collar and put me up before a case of type, thus giving me my introduction to the art of Guttenberg and Franklin. Mr. Branch may have "colored" the story a trifle, but I stuck to the business for some time.

The "Vox Populi" shop (some called the paper the "Nux Vomica") was located in a small building on the east side of Main Street some distance north of the bridge.

The business did not require very much of either editor's time. Consequently they were away much of the time. In their absence I occasionally printed a little paper of my own on the job press--a 4-page, 6 x 9 sheet. It bore the euphonious name of "The Waucoma Prognosticator". Usually, one copy only was printed.

The office boasted of a set of engraving tools, with which I profusely (?) illustrated "The Prognosticator" with wood cuts. I was always very careful to destroy all evidence of each "edition" by hiding the type forms in some out-of-the-way place--for fear of ridicule from the "bosses", and I do not believe the secret that I was a rival publisher ever became known. I would give much for a copy of my first effort as a newspaper publisher.

The "Vox Populi" publishers were very popular young fellows, but the business would not support both, so Mr. Detwiler went to Charles City and Mr. Branch remained to keep the "Voice of the People" going until the plant was sold to a number of citizens, rather than

see Waucoma deprived of an exponent of the Fourth Estate.

Rev. A. Palmer Litts, pastor of the Congregational Church, was elected editor, the paper renamed "The Sentinel" and the plant moved into the west room on the first floor of the Bank of Waucoma building.

I did not like the new management, after having worked with such jolly good fellows as Detwiler and Branch, and soon severed my connection as devil extraordinary.

It was in the "Vox Populi" office that I first saw a copy of Shakespeare's Works. It is probably due to the fact that Branch and Detwiler, who had much dramatic ability, frequently gave parts of Hamlet, Othello, King Richard the Third and others that I learned the value of the writings of the great Stratford poet, and have ever enjoyed reading poetry. Thus ended the first chapter of my newspaper career.

It was while I resided in "the Valley of Eden" that the second call to newspapering came in 1892.

Frank J. Stillman had purchased "The Waucoma Sentinel" and put forward the desire that I join him in the work at the stupendous sum of $3.00 a week. Overwhelmed with the munificence of the offer, I again entered printing. I remember I paid Aunt Hattie Stafford $2.00 a week for board and room from Monday morning until Saturday evening, leaving the princely sum of $1.00 for my own private use. This arrangement was made early in the spring.

In August, 1892, the town of Hawkeye, which had been dormant since its discovery by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, suddenly recovered animation and discovered that with a little effort it could "pull itself out of the mud" and become a place of importance. Of course it must have a newspaper. Mr. Stillman established one. Mr. Stillman had considerably more type than was needed at the Waucoma office. He selected the most obsolete type, bought a couple

of type stands, a Washington hand press that looked as though at least four generations of printers had worn themselves out thereon, and some other material.

Thus The Beacon plant made its triumphal march into Hawkeye. I was unanimously chosen editor by Mr. Stillman. The office was located in the back part of a building on the lot where the First State Bank building now stands. I. B. Ossman occupied the front part with a stock of footwear and a repair shop.

A sidewalk ran along the east side of the building, leading to a saloon, up the alley to the west, kept by Jerry Flahrety. There was a continual march of the male citizenry by the office door, going or coming from the saloon, some "highly organized", others "pickled."

I think it was from these scenes of drunken men reeling by that I conceived my violent opposition to the saloon traffic.

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A description of the interior of The Beacon office at that time might not be without interest. The room was about 18 x 20 feet in dimensions. The partition between the Ossman store and the office was boards set on end, unpainted and unpapered.

In the center was a nondescript stove. Along the north wall the "composing" stone was constructed from a large sheet of zinc over plank and these supported by some high trestles such as paper hangers used in those days.

To the westward, the Washington hand press loomed up in all its solitary splendor. On the south side the type stands stood, looking like the skeletons of a departed age.

A table fasioned from cheap pine lumber near the east window and a couple of decrepit chairs, looking as though they would like to

go somewhere and hide, completed the furniture and fixtures of that great luminary--The Hawkeye Beacon. There were no job press or paper cutter. Mr. Stillman decided that he could do that work more satisfactorily at Waucoma.

Under such circumstances, I made my way to Hawkeye the first week in August, resolved to do or die. Mr. Stillman came from Waucoma each week to assist in "the finishing touches" of The Beacon and the press of Northeastern Iowa spoke very kindly of The Beacon and its editor.

In 1893 (year of the World's Columbian Exposition) I leased The Beacon, Mr. Stillman taking as his rental the railroad advertising mileage, which amounted to several hundred dollars, when "cashed in" to ~~something~~ traveling men and mileage brokers. This mileage came in 500-mile and 1,000-mile books and was readily disposed of at less than regular fare.

S. H. Bevins leased The Beacon in 1894, and I divided my time between work on The Beacon and Waucoma Sentinel.

In 1895 Bopp Brothers Company, just organized in Hawkeye, bought The Beacon "while Mr. Bevins wasn't looking" (the Bopps and Bevins ran rival banks in Hawkeye) and it became the organ of the Bopp Bros. State Bank and its allied interests.

The plant was moved into convenient offices over Bopp Bros. State Bank, a job press and much new type and other material was purchased and The Beacon shone typographically as it never had before.

The organization of the Bopp Bros. State Bank started a bank fight that for years was the "delight" of West Union, the county seat, and other communities and a great detriment to the best interests of Hawkeye, where a new citizen need not be in Hawkeye overnight until an attempt was made to enlist his influence on one side or the other of the feud.

#5--My Newspaper Career

I was hired as local editor by the Bopp boys--Charles, Will, Fred and Ed--who constituted the Bopp Bros. Company.

Not to be outwitted by the clandestine, as it were, purchase of The Beacon, the First State Bank promoters bought a modest newspaper outfit and installed A.B. Peters as editor and Reub Babcock, printer.

The newspaper war was on. The Bopp boys had pinned their hope of making The Beacon a financial success by the use of the railroad advertising--the four being traveling salesmen.

Their hope was short-lived. To their intense astonishment, their mileage books and annual passes were confiscated by the railway conductors as fast as presented. Someone had notified the general passenger agents of the several roads that they were not bona fide newspaper men and, although railroad mileage used for political purposes, was one of the great scandals of America, the officials "acted" promptly in this case.

I remained with Bopp Bros. Company until late in 1895, when I was obliged to retire from the printing game on account of a severe and continued attack of lead poisoning (printer's colic.)

The next year I worked in The Beacon office a few months and in the fall transferred to "The Union" office at West Union.

The first of January, 1897, saw me at Wells, Minnesota, identified with "The Forum". This proved to be quite an adventure, as well as an education in larger town methods of printing and a much improved observation of social amenities.

The spring of 1899, Mr. Hoyer called me to Oelwein, Iowa, where I was installed as city editor, remaining until returning to Hawkeye as publisher of "The Hawkeye Beacon" in August of the same year.

"Newspapering" in Hawkeye was a very difficult and exciting experience the first twenty years. The bank fight had its ramifications

to nearly every other line of business and every move was vigilantly observed by the rival factions. The most trivial and irrelevant editorial utterance was liable to be misconstrued as favoring one side or the other, and as a result no one was pleased. It was a period of great unrest and suspicion that really worked harm for the town generally.

Matters continued in this way until in 1907, a rival newspaper publisher appeared in the person of Al F. Hock of St. Paul, who, after trying to purchase "The Beacon" established a rival in "The Hawkeye Press."

Hock was hailed with joy by the First State Bank faction, who had become aggrieved by the recent publication of an article in The Beacon by Charles W. Bopp, in which he lauded Bopp Bros. State Bank very highly. The other bank had the same privilege.

Mr. Hock happened in at the "psychological moment" and there was something very newsy in the local newspaper situation.

"The Hawkeye Press" lasted two issues. A printer who came with Hock to set up the newspaper plant, clandestinely discovered that Hock was a "plant" placed by none other than Charles W. Bopp, who paid for the outfit.

It was a deep laid plot by C. W. Bopp to use the rival First State Bank's cash patronage and influence for "The Press" until The Beacon editor should be forced to sell--there not being business for two papers--when the Bopp interests would take over The Beacon, consolidate the plants and indulge in a merry laugh in the faces of the First State Bank crowd, at their childish ignorance in matters of "diplomacy" in the newspaper game.

Mr. Bopp's inability to play a waiting game proved his undoing. He quarreled with Hock over the latter's delay in bringing things to an issue. At that "signal", I informed M. V. Henderson of the First State Bank how his organization had been duped.

It is needless to say that the "organization" got busy, accused Hock of his evil-doings, and so thoroughly scared him that he left at midnight next day, leaving Bopp with a useless newspaper plant and a busted newspaper ambition.

The two issues of "The Hawkeye Press" cost Bopp something over $1600, including what he had invested in the plant, from which he never realized a dollar in return.

Several printers came, from time to time, to look over the Hawkeye newspaper situation with the view of reviving "The Press" but one look was enough.

The business men stood by "The Beacon" manfully and they received no encouragement. After the Bopp-Hock-First State Bank fiasco, newspaper publishing gradually became more tolerable, until at this time, the publication of "The Beacon" is really an inspiration to those who find in journalism their life work.

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON" - Will N. Rogers

MOVE TO IOWA

We are going back in our narrative, to the coming of my forefathers to the west, which perhaps, should have preceded what has gone before.

The old rock-ribbed Rogers farm in northern Vermont yielded a scanty income for the growing family of James Rogers. True, there were over 400 acres, part of which was reserved as a maple sugar "bush", as the plat of hard maple trees was called, and there was much good pasture. The farm land, however, was quite barren and in the early fifties it was necessary to fertilize every hill of corn at planting in order to secure any crop in return.

Then it was that the thought of of the family turned to the land of promise—the West. About that time James Rogers received a letter from a cousin, Franklin Rogers, who some years ago had journeyed west and settled near Fort Atkinson, Iowa. He sent a very favorable report of the Winneshiek country, then open for white settlers and offered to lease grandfather a portion of his farm until he had time to select land of his own. This offer was accepted and the family began its preparatifn for the notable journey.

Reuben Rogers, then twenty years of age, in company with an elder brother, Luther, preceded the family several months in advance, to get done the Spring sowing.

The young men arrived at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, March 16, 1858. The ice in the Mississippi river had melted but partially and the ferry boat had not resumed operation. The brothers finally secured the services of a man with a row boat to get them across the "Father of Waters." Where the ice was firm they dragged the boat and alternately riding and walking, after much violent exertion and profuse perspiration, our adventurers landed in McGregor, Iowa.

Arrangements had been made whereby Franklin Rogers was to meet the boys there, but he could not be found. Thinking he had been delayed, the boys took the Military Trail for Fort Atkinson and walked the entire distance, 75 miles, to the Rogers farm. A confusion of dates was the reason Franklin Rogers failed to meet them at McGregor. Later the rest of the family came west. It is related that the freight rate on their household goods from Vermont to Prairie du Chien, Wis., was $5.00 the hundred weight.

The farm they first occupied was on the Fort Atkinson-Twin Springs [Festina] road three miles north and one-half mile east of St Lucas. Franklin Rogers and a number of relatives are buried in a private cemetery on his farm, later known as the Young place. The farm has passed to strangers and the little cemetery enclosed by a fence of limestone was sadly in need of care and repair in 1894. The old house where James Rogers lived is gone.

James Rogers later moved his family to Fort Atkinson where a part of the long stone barrack building at the fort—the soldiers having been withdrawn—was occupied.

In 1861 the James Rogers family moved to Eden, Fayette county, where he died July 4, 1864.

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON" - WILL N. ROGERS

INDIAN LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES

Leaves From The Life Of a Country Editor

INDIAN LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES

"Editor's Note—While an invalid in the last year of his life, Will N. Rogers, former publisher of The Beacon, wrote a series of sketches covering recollections of his life, lived almost entirely in Fayette county. While intended to be autobiographical, Will Rogers was a newspaper man first and last, and these memoirs more often turned out to be articles about episodes or scenes he encountered along the road of life than writings about himself. Now, seven years after his death, The Beacon is venturing for the first time to publish two or three of the series of sketches, and would like to hear from readers whether or not they find the articles entertaining or interesting."

The Bethel prairie was the last unsettled land in Fayette county and to it the Indian tribes came every summer on their pilgrimages. The visitors were always a cause of wonderment as well as fear to the writer, remembering the tales of Indian warfare of the earlier days.

These Indians retained theis barbaric dress, modified by civilized customs and the men and women presented a motley appearance. The braves carried guns, revolvers, hunting knives and hatchets. Ridiculous to see them walking beside their wagons lugging all these things.

I remember a party of about one hundred camped on a high ridge, about a mile south of my father's farm on one occasion. A horse had died near the camp and the Indian traces of them.

An Early School

The winter of 1867-68 my father, Reuben Rogers, was employed to teach in the Pitts school (Bethel No. 1). That school was notorious for its constant uproar during the winter months, when the "big boys" of the district attended, not for the learning, but for the excitement of brawling and making trouble for the teachers.

On this particular winter, two teachers had given up the school after a few stormy sessions. The man being "licked" by the "big boys" and literally thrown out and the woman teacher who followed, giving up in despair, after several individual "battles."

School directors and patrons gave teachers no cooperation in these days. The teachers were told they "must govern the school—or get out".

This was the situation when father invaded "Pittsburg" as teacher. The first half day session went very smoothly—in fact too smoothly to be reassuring. When school was called at the close of the noon intermission, one of the "big boys" started the ball rolling. He came into the room after all the rest of the pupils were seated and in passing to his seat in the rear of the room, rubbed his hands over the faces and rumpled the hair of each pupil seated next to the aisle. He had barely reached his seat when the teacher was upon him. The boy felt himself suddenly seized by the collar and slack of his pantaloons,

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON" - WILL N. ROGERS

THE CIVIL WAR
AND AFTER

Leaves From The Life R Of a Country Editor

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Reuben F. Rogers enlisted in the Twelfth Iowa Volunteer Infantry, company C., at Eden and served in the Union army a year, when he was discharged on account of disability caused by continued illness.

He took part in the battles of Forts Donelson and Henry, but was in the hospital during the famous battle of Shiloh. During that engagement the Union hospital was shelled by the Confederates and the patients forced to move under protection of the gunboats, to a flat near the river.

Such as were able to walk were obliged to do so. In the excitement and confusion of the retreat the hospital tents and equipment were left behind and the sick and wounded were obliged to lie on the ground all night with little or no protection. A heavy Spring rain came and the flat was soon covered with water. Father was so weak he could not stand or move about and was obliged to lie in the water all night with a hill of corn for a pillow to keep his head out of water.

Generals Grant and Sherman reorganized their armies and next day administered a defeat to the Rebel forces as history records.

Reuben Rogers returned to Eden and was united in marriage with Clara Utter Feb. 6, 1864, by Alex Innes, J. P.

The young people began house keeping in the Blackman cottage, a beautiful little place nestling among oak trees on the north bank of the Little Turkey river one-half mile west of the village of Eden.

Port Washington, a laid out town on land best known as the homestead of Charles B. Dickens in Bethel township, possessed a blacksmith shop and wagon factory. Father moved his family there in 1866 and engaged in the manufacture and repair of wagons. Port Washington citizens hoped to make it a town but the ambition was never realized. A few houses were built and a small store opened by one of the Pitts brothers. The stock was rather diminutive. Father said the entire store supplies might have been hauled away in a lumber wagon box.

It was about this time that the 80-acre farm on which the "Little Old Log House" was located, was purchased and the family moved there, the place of my first recollections.

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON" - WILL N. ROGERS

THE OLD FASHIONED SINGING SCHOOL

Leaves From The Life Of a Country Editor

"Editor's Note—While an invalid in the last year of his life, Will N. Rogers, former publisher of The Beacon, wrote a series of sketches covering recollections of his life, lived almost entirely in Fayette county. While intended to be autobiographical, Will Rogers was a newspaper man first and last, and these memoirs more often turned out to be articles about episodes or scenes he encountered along the road of life than writings about himself. Now, seven years after his death, The Beacon is venturing for the first time to publish a few series of sketches

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THE OLD FASHIONED SINGING SCHOOL

One of the oldest of American institutions is the singing school. This admirable accessory to learning, had much to do with the early developed of music. This branch was not taught in the public schools but was an extra social accomplishment designed to bring whole communities—young and old—togethe-for instruction in vocal music.

My father was very proficient in singing and his services were often called for in the capacity of singing master. One winter, while living at Waucoma, the Eden community decided it needed the culture of a "singing school." Father was secured as teacher and Martin Potter, formerly of Eden, was named as "transportation committee."

The conveyance consisted of horses and a sleigh. It was the habit of people wishing to have something lighter than bob sleighs to construct a somewhat peculiar sleigh. The runners of the "strange craft" were cut from solid lumber, and varied in length. The box was fashioned the size desired and fitted to the runners. When completed the sled—some called it a "pong"—made a light, but efficient mode of transportation, clumsily yet solidly built.

The people from Waucoma going to Eden in this turnout usually were Mr and Mrs Potter, Father, sister Rosamond and myself.

I shall never forget the first night impression of the interior of the Eden schoolhouse. The room was overflowing with people when we arrived. A few small bracket oil lamps at the sides of the room gave forth an uncertain light. In the front part of the room was the teacher's desk. A long iron stove capable of taking in an entire length of cordwood was fired to a red hot pitch. The desks were the pioneer type—of home made lumber, awkward and grotesque in shape. The carvings by jack knives by pupils who had evidently wished to make their mark in the world were something wonderful to behold. Some of the desk tops had been cut nearly in two by jack knife artists, while sprawling initials and "cabalistic" signs covered their tops and sides. The desks had long since outlived their usefulness, but no thought of modern equipment seemed to have entered the minds of the "school fathers".

(To be continued)

HAWKEYE, IOWA, THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1933

Leaves From The Life Of a Country Editor

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Equally strange in aspect was the waiting crowd. Following the backwoods habit many of the boys and young men did not cut their hair during the entire fall and winter and as it was in February when the singing school was in session, the appearance of some was wonderful to behold. However, these were in the minority, the young folks for the most part being well groomed. But this touch of the backwoods reminded me of the tales of the "Hoosier Schoolmaster" and others of that period.

Father divided the school for part singing, that is, the sopranos, altos, tenors and basses into sections. It was rather difficult to induce the young fellows with their "best girls" to take seats across the room and in some cases the couples absolutely refused to be separated even in the interests of "harmony". After making the best arrangements possible, the singing master opened the school.

The initial lessons were quite discouraging. Some there were who could not tell one note from another and never learned the changes in tones, singing in a mono-tone all winter thru. Others proved quite apt pupils and by spring the community singing had vastly improved. Such was the old fashioned singing school.

There were diversions, too, not on the program. For instance a pair of young fellows engaged in a fist fight in the schoolroom, this proving that music does not always "soothe the savage breast." I remember one particular man who could not produce a musical tone. Suddenly turning to him one evening the singing master said, "Mr Blank, what part do you sing, anyhow?" "Why," Mr Blank replied, "none in particular; I always help out the weakest part.

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON" - WILL N.ROGERS

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE

Leaves From The Life Of a Country Editor

FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE

THE GRANGE

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The first public Christmas exercises on Bethel prairie, that I remember, occurred at Chamberlin school(Bethel No. 3). The night, as I remember, was a perfect Christmas eve. The ground white with snow and a bright moon, shedding its clear beams over the fields on which were reflected thousands of "diamond crystals" of the frost king. I do not remember much about the program other than the singing of the Christmas carols,and my part which was a declamation entitled "Ben Brindle".

It will be noted that the declamation was not strictly along Christmas lines, but in those pioneer days "talent" was recognized in whatever guise.

As I remember, the effort met with great applause; and, blushing and confused, we hurried back to where our parents were seated in the audience. The grand finale of the evening was the singing of "Jingle,Jingle,Come Kris Kringle" during which Santa Claus arrived and distributed the gifts that had adorned the tree. This small boy received a toy gun and a bag of of candy and nuts, much to his childish delight. Then the sleigh ride home, through the frosty Yuletide night, concluded an evening of rare delight.

The First Funeral Service

Indelibly stamped on my memory is the first funeral I attended, when a lad of about six years. The funeral was for a small child and occurred at "Bethel" schoolhouse.

I remember having accompanied Mother, riding in a lumber wagon. Mother drove the team with all the dexterity of a pioneer woman. The scene in the schoolhouse is very vivid. The little, white wooden coffin, the singing of the choir, and the sermon by the minister who sought to comfort the bereaved from God's Holy Word.

It was summer and the windows were open. My glance strayed from the dark sorrows indoors to the bright sunlight without. I remember distinctly of having seen a meadow lark not many rods from the school building, and, as it perched on the limb of a small bush, sang its song. Somehow the song of that little bird quieted the tumult of my spirit and I became very calm. How the charm of nature allures and comforts if one beholds its beauties with a poetic mind and discerning eye.

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON " - WILL N.ROGERS

THE GRANGE

Leaves From The Life Of a Country Editor

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The Patrons of Husbandry (Grange) came into existence as a protest against the "Crime of 1873" when the money power caused the demonetization of silver, which heretofore had circulated on a parity with silver and gold and as a legal tender for debts both public and private. The contraction of the money supply caused prices to decline so sharply that the farmers were the greatest sufferers from their commodities becoming well nigh worthless. Labor was thrown out of employment and a great army of tramps swarmed over the country.

The "anti-monopoly" cry was raised all over the land and the Grange came forward to combat the "money power". The society failed in its purpose because the agricultural class could not be organized into an effective group. First because of the remoteness of

The Bethel Grange met at the Gager schoolhouse, about in the center of the township. I was the only child in our family permitted to attend the Grange sessions, Rolla and Rosamond being old enough to absorb the secrets of the Order clandestinely should they have been admitted. As I remember, I, in company with a number of other small children remained in the entry of the schoolhouse while candidates "rode the goat". Sometimes we yonngsters would peek in when the door was opened to admit a late member, only to see several men and women decorously going through the ceremonies of the Grange ritual. We children—usually about five years of age—fell asleep early, unmindful of the importance of the occasion.

Gager's Grove, on the John T. Gager farm was the meeting place of Bethel township's "embattled farmers" arrayed in joint debate with the representative Republicans of the county. Some who upheld the "banner of Republicanism" that we can remember weae: Governor William Larrabee of Clermont, W. B. Lakin of Fayette and W. E. Fuller of West Union. The "Peoples" champions were such men as Fred Gleim of Arlington and L. H. Weller of Nashna, and others. Gager's grove resonnded with impassioned oratory, partisan songs and deafening applause. Bethel township was so strongly partisan for the "Peoples Party" that opposing campaign speakers were fortunate to get through their argu-

ger or the store took a candy down from a shelf sented me with several gorgeously striped stick candy. That gracious gift completely won me over to the cause of the Grange.

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was indeed a gala occasion. The officers of the order graced the revel clothed in regalia, much to the awe of the small children and others who had never seen the Grange in "action". The parlor of the Chamberlin home was on the second floor and a most wonderful Brussels carpet—the only one in Bethel township—all the other homes having nothing better than rag carpets or bare floors—made the affair seem quite regal. This banquet occurred in the winter of 1876-77. Real oysters were served, the first many of us had ever tasted. I remember how I humiliated my family by tipping my plate of soup over on the table cloth. I was being repremanded rather sharply when Mrs Chamberlin happened along and in her usual pleasing way assured us that no damage was done and order came out of chaos. After supper there was games, music and a general round of sociability. The only reed instrument in the townships was a four octave melodion my father's people had brought from Vermont. This instrument was carted all over the neighborhood to parties and it graced this occasion. The melodeon originally stood on four legs, but they became rather rickety from their many excursions from home to home. Father fashioned a substantial case for the instrument and thus it stands today in my home. A new bellows is all the repair necessary for it to come into practical use.

Thus was brought to a close the Grange as an organization in Bethel townsdip, but the "Peoples' Party" still flourished for many years in Bethel.

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON" - Will N. Rogers

MARTIAL MUSIC ON THE PRAIRIE

Leaves From The Life Of a Country Editor

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MARTIAL MUSIC ON THE PRAIRIE

"Editor's Note—While an invalid in the last year of his life, Will N. Rogers, former publisher of The Beacon, wrote a series of sketches covering recollections of his life, lived almost entirely in Fayette county. While intended to be autobiographical, Will Rogers was a newspaper man first and last, and these memoirs more often turned out to be articles about episodes or scenes he encountered along the road of life than writings about himself. Now, seven years after his death, The Beacon is venturing for the first time to publish a few series of sketches

Bethel proudly boasted of a fife and drum corps, whose membership included Eph Rogers and Chub Bemis, fifers; Riley Ostrander, Ed Ostrander, Jack Leslie and Ben Ostrander, snare drummers; Frank Ostrander, bass drummer. Their rehearsals at "The Corners" were a regular thing on pleasant Sundays during the summer months. Then foot-racing, wrestling, jumping and other athletic sports made the days pass quickly. No wonder the young men flocked to "The Corners" and no doubt many of the "fair sex" were attracted thither by the "doings" of the day.

Bethel township, however, was not the only community that boasted of a fife and drum corps, Waucoma, Eden, Auburn, West Union and Fayette had such organizations and Brush Creek (Arlington) boasted of a "brass band."

It was the custom of these drum corps to visit neighboring towns as vociferously as possible trying to "drown the music" of the other. It is needless to state that pandemonium reigned supreme for a few minutes, but through it all spectators remained, urging their favorites to greater and still greater effort.

Many a valuable calfskin drumhead was torn asunder by the continued and augmented attacks of drumsticks. The contests ended when one or the other drum corps were "played down" or came to a draw by exhaustion or other causes.

A Shotgun Episode

Brother Rolla and I had made many requests for a gun. Our father (Reuben Rogers) had put us off from time to time, with such remarks as "a gun is a dangerous thing without lock, stock or barrel". While roaming over the prairie one day, brother and I discovered an old gun barrel. It had lain there so long the gun stock had decayed, leaving no trace. Triumphantly we bore our prize home, where with file sandpaper and grindstone we removed the years' accumulation of rust. We then interviewed Father again, and he fashioned a very nice gun stock from a piece of black walnut and when he made his next trip to West Union purchased a lock and other trimmings: also powder, shot and caps.

It was a proud pair of brothers, who, with much paternal advice about the use of firearms and more maternal advice concerning being careful to avoid accidents, sallied out over the prairie in search of adventure. Our powder and shot

FIRST RECOLLECTIONS

Leaves From The Life Of a Country Editor

FIRST RECOLLECTIONS

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My earliest recollection of life on this terrestrial ball was the pleasant occupation of lying under the evergreen shade trees in the front yard at the "Little Old Log House"—as my mother has so often termed the place of my nativity—gazing upward through the boughs and leaves at the sun-lit, golden hued summer heavens, watching the fleecy clouds as they raced by on the wings of the summer wind.

According to family tradition this occurred on the third year of my earthly sojourn. I was a fat, roly poly infant. Mother would spread a blanket under the trees, on which I would lie for hours absorbed in "childish astronomy." It is said three years is an early age for a child to have formed definite

ceiling was unfinished the driving snow of winter would sift through the roof and the occupants of the beds were very likely to be awakened by the snow blowing in their faces. There was plenty of ventilation. At this time there were five members of the House of Rogers, to say nothing of the occasional visits of uncles and aunts. Then there were strangers passing that way who had to be housed and one winter two young men school teachers, Cleil and Homer Wasson of Delhi, Iowa, who taught the Chamberlain and Gager schools, appealed for shelter and would not be denied. By this it will readily be understood that the cubical contents of "The Little Old Log House" was fully utilized. It was said of another pioneer home in the vicinity, "The last one in shut the door and laid down and the house was full." This was not true at "The Little Old Log House," but there was a germ of fact in the application of the quotation.

The pioneer owner of the place had set out a number of fruit and other trees, and there was a plum thicket and berry bushes; so it was quite a home for the early Seventies when only a small portion of the virgin soil of Bethel township had yielded to the plow. There were two other farm houses in the immediate vicinity, the Kenyon place a few rods to the south, and the Will Bartley place about the same distance in that direction, but on the west side of the road. Mr Kenyon imagined himself a preacher, having been given a local exhorter's license. The neighbors called him a "local exhauster".

Less than a mile to the north was "The Corners", where Grandmother Rogers and some of the younger brothers and sisters resided. Father owned "The Corners". I have only

(Leaves from the Life of a Country Editor: Copies from W.N. Roger's handwritten manuscript.)

First Fourth of July Celebration

The scene of my first Fourth of July celebration was laid in the grove just west of the John T. Gager farmstead in Bethel. It seemed a great gala occasion, with its people and their best attire, the raised platform, gaily decorated, for speakers and musicians, the snapping of firecrackers mingling with the hubbub of a gathering of people.

Martial music was furnished by the Bethel Fife and Drum Corps which, gaily adorned in brilliant red sashes, was the center of interest. I remember having worn a linen suit, but whether there was the adornment of shoes and stockings I do not remember.

One of the tragedies of the day occurred when a small boy exploded a firecracker in the writer's face and some of the powder particles entered the writer's eye, causing much confusion for a brief period.

It may be said that the picnic celebration was a great success.

The Old Swimmin' Hole

"Whitman's Deep Hole", so named after Whitman Smith, owner of the land through which that part of Crane Creek ran, about a mile west of the Gouldsburg Mill, was the favorite swimming place of the Eden boys, although to reach it meant a walk of over two miles.

The "deep hole" was 10 to 12 feet deep in a number of places, and a diving or spring board made it very attractive for aquatic pastimes.

Vividly outlined in my mind is an almost double drowning tragedy that happened one beautiful summer day. About a dozen of us young fellows, including Roe Marshall, young George Smith, Ed Parker, Pierce and Walter Parker and the writer made our way to the "deep hole" and were soon disporting in its pleasant waters.

Walter Parker, a short, fat boy, could not swim very far and got farther out than he had intended. All at once he went under, but bobbed up again like a cork, calling for help!

Pierce and Ed Parker, both strong swimmers, went to his aid, but the boys were so excited one tried to swim to the south bank and the other to the north shore. Being about equal strength, of course they got nowhere and try as best the rest of us could, we could not get them to swim in the same direction.

Walter went under again, dragging Pierce down with him. The latter was not expecting to be drawn under the water and caught thus unprepared swallowed a large amount of water.

Just about the time the boys were going down for the third time, George Smith, who was sitting on the river bank, came to life and threw a piece of plank that luckily lay near him out into the water near us. We managed to get the drowning lads on the plank and towed them

#2--The Old Swimmin' Hole

to shore, where they lay a long time recovering from their experience in the water.

It is the only time I ever heard of any near water tragedy at "Whitman's Deep Hole." Needless to state, it took all the joy out of swimming that day.

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LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON" - Will N. Rogers

Move to Hawkeye

The head of the Rogers family decided it was time to move from "The Little Old Log House", located in the S. W. Quarter of the S. W. Quarter of Section 11, Bethel township, and thus it came about that Father purchased 160 acres in Sections 14 and 23, Bethel township, site of the Henry Reichel farm, and in 1876 the "trek" to the new home was made. The former owner of the eighty acres in Section 14 had partially built a house, which Father soon finished into a comfortable home. He planted ornamental and hard maple trees in the front yard, an apple orchard at the rear and a willow wind break on the north and west sides of the group of farm buildings.

After getting nicely settled here and everything going smoothly, Father contracted the "Kansas Fever" and, falling into the hands of an unscrupulous land agent, traded his fine quarter section of Iowa land for a section of wild land in Kansas. Much consternation ensued when a belated report from the "Sunflower State" stated that all the land, with the exception of about 15 acres, was nothing but a group of stony hills.

Adopting the tactics of the land agents, Father exhibited a burst of Yankee shrewdness and traded the Kansas land for another farm in Bethel township, and that for the Houghmaster farm one mile north of Hawkeye. The house and other buildings on this place were in a wretched, tumble down condition and the land for the most part only good for a duck farm. Father attacked his new job of home making with a vim, rebuilt the house and barns, ditched considerable of the land and entered extensively into raising cattle and hogs—heretofore he had been a grain farmer. All trace of this farmstead has now disappeared, movable property being incorporated in the farm 80 rods east.

All was going well here until Father contracted rheumatism and was obliged to abandon farming.

The family moved to Hawkeye in 1882, where a livery business and a new residence were purchased. The house stood just west of the livery barn, which was on the corner of Wilbur and First streets.

The Hawkeye livery business was traded for a more extensive livery outfit in 1884. This business was continued two years, when Father went into the general merchandise business with his brother-in-law, Warren Stafford, of New Hampton, in the "old stone store" in Waucoma. This partnership continued several years.

Much better school advantages were obtained by the move to Waucoma, as there were graded schools and a high school. The Turkey river furnished great sport for skating in the winter and boating, swimming and fishing in the summer months. In fact life at Waucoma was ideal from my boyish standpoint.

The boy who has not had the advantages of "growing up" near the woods and a river certainly has missed a great deal in the study of nature as well as recreational advantages. Waucoma was at the height of its business and social prosperity about the time we moved there.

I remember how some enterprising young men enclosed a part of the mill pond with a high board fence, and with a huge pump flooded the surface of the enclosure with water every day making a perfect surface for ice skating.

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY EDITOR
"THE HAWKEYE BEACON" - Will N. Rogers

The Eden Lyceum

Leaves From The Life Of a Country Editor

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THE EDEN LYCEUM

The Eden Community was settled by American born people who came from the Eastern and Middle States They brought many admirable customs, among which was the Lyceum —not the hired affairs of today. The "talent" was the people of the community.

This organization believed in making use of the talent that lay at hand. The plan was most admirable as it resulted in an added educational feature, in which the people directly benfitted—learning by doing.

These exercises consisted of singing, declamations and dialogues by members of the public school followed by a debate by the men of the community. The subjects of religion and politics were barred.

Such topics as "Resolved—That Anticipation is greater than Realization": "Resolved—That the Pen is Mightier than the Sword," and other important subjects were fought out in the forum of public debate, where grey beard and youth battled valiantly for supremacy on the rostrum.

Occasionally some of the more "advanced" women and young ladies entered the debates, but for the most part the feminine portion of audience heeded St Paul's injunction to "keep silent in the congregation". Many amusing incidents could be related altho there was a really cultural side to the Eden lyceums of the years 1885 to 1887.

Picture the lyceum scene: the school house interior as described in the chapter on the singing school. A turkey red calico curtain stretched on a wire in the front part of the room constituted all the "scenery" for the "dramatic" parts of the Lyceum. The "footlights" a few sputtering candles, the stage furniture, the teacher's desk and chair and the smelly bracket oil lamps on the sides of the room trying to dispel the gloom. I have sat in moving picture theatres and witnessed great million dollar film productions; I have listened to great bands and orchestras and have seen some great actors on the mimic stage, but none of these have thrilled me as did the Eden Lyceum of the Eighties.

In Politics

In 1906 I was thrust into politics. The county chairman of the Republican party resigned and the party was badly disrupted by Progressives and Standpatters.

Three of the party candidates were marked for "slaughter" by the machine and I came into the chairmanship as a Progressive. I was expected to assist in the defeat of the three candidates but proceeded to be chairman of ALL the Republicans.

It was a strenuous fight. It turned out that the three candidates were defeated by Democratic candidates, but by very small majorities--around 16 to 30 votes, as I remember. If I had been a little more experienced in the game of politics, I could have pulled the candidates through.

Two years later I was elected chairman practically without opposition and the Democrats were retired from county office. I was asked to go to Des Moines to become a part of the Progressive-Cummins "machine", but did not see the way clear to make the venture.

The game of <u>politics</u> as it is <u>worked</u> is very distasteful to me. I am too much of a non-conformist. If a man desires to be a politician, he must shut his eyes to all his ideals and rush blindly in.

The last days of a worn-out politician is about the most pitiful thing in the body politic. He comes to the close of his political days "unwept, unhonored and unsung."

Since twenty years ago I have given politics, as far as conventions are concerned, a wide berth, as it were. I have never regretted that I did not continue in the "game", which might have led me a considerable way to political preferment.

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Leaves from the Life of a Country Editor, by Will N. Rogers

Activities with Boys

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The leadership of boys and young men has always had a stirring appeal with me. Too many men, I fear, are neglectful of their great opportunity in this great work.

After my return to Hawkeye in 1899, I engaged in something definite in the supervision of boys in recreational pursuits. My first work was to organize a Sunday School class of boys of 12 years and upward.

Knowing that the "dry as dust" Sunday School Lessons would not create a bond that would interest and tie a class together, I added various attractions for the purpose of welding the group into an organization that would have a tendency toward a lasting cohesiveness.

My first experiments were years before the Boy Scout movement or any other boy organizations were thought of, and I take what I believe is a pardonable pride in being a pioneer in the Back to the Boy Movement.

The first year a series of Spring, Summer and Fall excursions to the rivers and woods were executed. They were much enjoyed by the boys, who did not have the opportunity of holidaying in the woods often.

Our first trip was to Falling Spring. The Hiams' white horses and lumber wagon with Edward as driver was the means of transportation. The picnicers that day included George and Harry Bortner, Russell Palmer, Leon Townsend, Glen Walker, Walter Wier, Edward Hiams and probably some others.

In 1911 our first regular camp was established. The site of the camp was among the stately oak trees in the pasture west of the Crane Creek bridges.

#2--Activities with Boys

We named it "Nutwood Camp." We were very comfortably situated and remained several days. The members of the party were Glen Walker, Harry Bortner, Russell Palmer, Marion Jacobs, Leon Townsend, Edward Hiams, George Bortner and Percy Sorg; and two smaller boys, Edwin Walsh and Newell Rogers.

Among the pleasant diversions of the camp was a most delightful dinner on invitation of Mrs. George Brockway and daughters, Mary and Myra, at the Brockway home a few miles distant from camp. After living on camp fare for several days, that dinner was a veritable oasis in a desert of primitive dietics.

The next camp was pitched at Mayo's Spring. The personnel was Leon Townsend, Percy Sorg, Russell Palmer, Glen Walker, Walter Wier, Roy Williamson, Harry Bortner, Newell Rogers, "Bugs" Fordyce and Edwin Walsh. This was the last regular camp until the organization of the Hawkeye Troop of Boy Scouts of America.

The Scouts came into existence in Hawkeye early in 1915. On the first Spring hike, the prospective Scouts were Erwin Gundacker, Edwin Walsh, Newell Rogers, Will Wilbur, Marvin Lee, Arnold Dietel, Leo Busch, Lester Brooks, Joe Bevins.

The hike was made to the "Devil's Den" on Crane Creek before the snow was all melted. The boys enjoyed the camp fire and the lunch. The organization was made without delay. The original membership was Arnold Dietel, Gustave Belschner, Lester Brooks, Howard Chapman, Erwin Gundacker, Karl Westenberger, Joe Bevins, Newell Rogers, Lawrence Linn, Edwin Walsh, Will Wilbur, Lanny Bogart.

The first Scout camp was in the grove across the river from the village of Eden. We camped there July 2 and 3, and on the 4th hiked to Alpha, where a Fourth of July celebration was being held.

#3--Activities with Boys

It rained during the camp at Eden and during the second night we were obliged to camp in a barn.

Fourth of July dawned bright and clear. After the camp equipage had been dried and everything packed on the hike wagon, we started on the way to Alpha with patrol flags gaily fluttering. Khaki uniforms had not been seen in this region and proved quite a curiosity to the countryside folks.

One timid farmer's wife thought the German Army was coming and hid.

Nearly all the parents of the Scouts were in Alpha. The Scouts greatly enjoyed the picnic dinner in company with their parents. The troop took part in the parade after dinner and the rest of the day they celebrated as they desired.

Next year the camp was at Smoketown. The country afforded fine opportunity for signaling, plenty of fishing, baseball and Scout sports made up a full program. The membership had grown to 18. The same summer there was a very successful camp at Alpha.

The last was the best from recreational and disciplinary standpoints.

(Parenthetical note in pencil:)
(probably by his wife.)
(The writer never completed the series on "Activities with Boys.")

WILL N. ROGERS -COUNTRY EDITOR
OBITUARY
SEPT. 9, 1926

Will N. Rogers Dies Early Sunday After Year's Illness

Will N. Rogers, editor and publisher of THE BEACON, is dead.

Cloaked in the sable mantle of the night, he slipped away at 2:45 o'clock Sunday morning, as had been his hope. Death claimed him so gently that those at his bedside were unaware when the lifeline snapped.

In accordance with plans outlined by himself, the funeral was held at the Methodist Episcopal church Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock. The Rev. Dr. D. M. Parker gave the sermon, and the Rev. G. C. Nothdurft assisted in the service. These rites were preceded by a short service at the home at 11:20 o'clock.

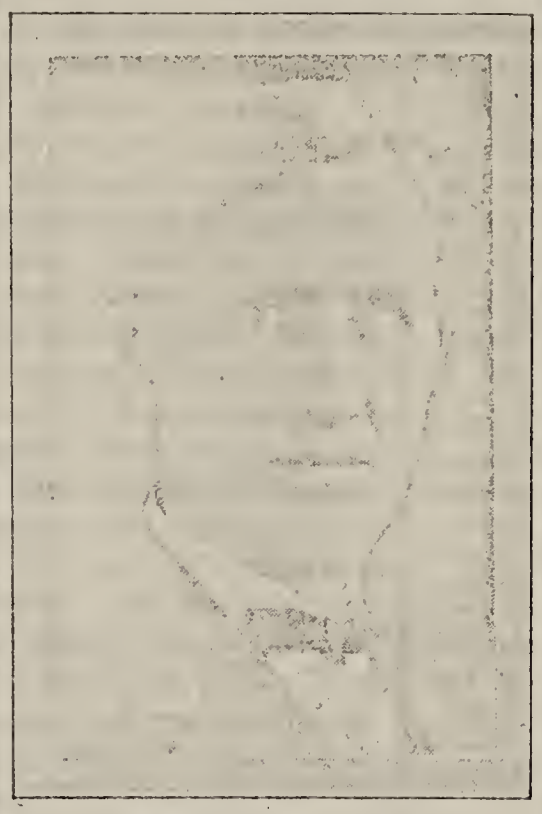
The casket was then taken to the church, where the body lay in state for two hours, while friends passed before the bier. Representatives from the Masonic and Odd Fellow lodges were attendants of honor at the bier. Interment was in Hawkeye cemetery.

Will N. Rogers was born in a 13 by 18 foot log cabin in Bethel township, May 7, 1872. He was the son of Reuben F. and Clara Utter Rogers and the third of five children. Reuben Rogers was a Vermonter, and in company with a brother, Luther, came to Iowa in 1858, walking over the Military trial 75 miles from Prairie du Chien, Wis., to Fort Atkinson. He was married to Clara Utter at Eden Feb. 6, 1864.

Will Rogers has left, in a journal of his life, his memories of this log cabin home:

"My earliest recollection of life on this terrestrial ball was the pleasant occupation of lying under the evergreen shade trees in the front yard at the 'little old log house'—as my mother had so often termed the place of my nativity—gazing upward, through the boughs and leaves at the sunlit, golden-hued, summer heavens, watching the fleecy clouds as they raced by on the wings of the summer wind."

1872-1926



Will N. Rogers

Changing scenes marked his boyhood as the family moved from one home to another. In 1876 they moved to another Bethel farm. Another year saw them on what was known as the Houghmaster farm, no longer in existence, a mile north of Hawkeye. In 1882 Reuben Rogers came to Hawkeye, conducted a livery business, and traded this property for a similar enterprise in Waucoma two years later. There the growing boy obtained his public school education.

Will Rogers' life has been given to one occupation—printing and publishing newspapers. His career in this vocation began at the age of 14. He has amusingly described the beginning of his life work:

"My newspaper career—the only career I have had—began in 1886. That year I entered the employ of J. Snare Detwiler and Homer P. Branch, who were publishers of the Waucoma Vox Populi. Mr. Branch says he

reached out of the office door as I was passing, grabbed me by the collar and put me before a case of type thus giving me my introduction to the art of Guttenberg and Franklin. Mr Branch may have 'colored' the story a trifle, but I stuck to the business for some time."

When Branch & Detwiler sold the paper, young Rogers left the print shop, but the lure of printer's ink would not be gainsaid. Some years later, Frank J. Stillman came into possession of the Waucoma paper and hired the future BEACON publisher then living the life of a country boy at Eden, at a salary of $3 a week.

In August, 1893, Stillman set up a newspaper at Hawkeye and sent his young employe to the new town to be the first editor. Thus it was that Will Rogers presided at the birth of the first issue of THE BEACON.

Here in a tiny building 18 by 24 feet in size, with meager and outworn equipment, the young printer-editor worked until 1895 when illness sent him into the valley of Eden to recuperate.

The next year saw him employed for short periods in THE BEACON office here and the Union office at West Union. In January, 1897, he joined the staff of the Wells (Minn.) Forum.

It was while living at Wells that he was married to Maude Schrack, youngest daughter of Mrs. Maud Schrack, Hawkeye. The wedding took place June 29, 1898, in the same church where his funeral was held Tuesday. Two sons, Newell S. and Robert F., were born to this union.

The young couple moved to Owatonna in January, 1899, where the husband was city editor of the Regis

until August of the same year when he returned to Hawkeye to become owner and editor of THE BEACON. He never left this post.

His creed as an editor is summed up in a casual item printed years ago in THE BEACON. He said:

"This paper is devoted mainly to the interests of Hawkeye and talks for it in and out of season. It is interested in this people. It is with you in your joys and sorrows. It is with you when it announces that little ones have come into homes to gladden hearts with merry prattle of infant voices and the patter of busy feet; it is with you when the wedding bells ring in the sunny noon day of life; when your sons and daughters plight their troth at the marriage altar; it is with you when the dark pall of death comes to your homes, blighting happiness and causing you to remember the words of the poet, 'into each life some rain must fall, some days must be dark and dreary.' We have no time to devote to aught but speaking well of this community. No doubt it has its shortcomings, but we pass them by to speak of better things. Would that the man who is always speaking ill of his neighbor and his town might stop and think how much better the time might be spent in their praise. Let the pessimist say what he will, we believe in a splendid optimism."

Although the only rival paper in Hawkeye lasted but two weeks, his lot as Hawkeye's editor during the first 20 years was, to quote his own words, "difficult and exciting."

Beset at times with reverses and anxieties, he also found much joy and happiness in the town to which he gave his life. He threw himself behind every laudable community enterprise. He was an idealist. For his ideals, he readily sacrificed personal advancement and financial gain. He stood against the saloon, not only losing business thereby, but also undergoing threats of physical violence. He would not stoop to "dirty politics" although in 1906 he was chairman of the Republican county committee and refused an offer to join the Progressive-Cummins machine in Des Moines.

Through the years his circle of friends widened. His fraternal affiliations were many—Masonic, Odd Fellow, Modern Woodman, Mystic Worker. But social and fraternal obligations did not usurp the place of the church in his life. He affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal church at Hawkeye, serving in all of its lay positions. He was superintendent of the Sunday school until his last illness forced him to resign.

Meanwhile, his paper grew in reputation and achievement. His friends and fellow editors have been kind enough to say that THE BEACON under his editorship has been consistently one of the best papers of its class in Iowa. In 1924 it was ranked among the highest for general news excellence in a state-wide contest at Iowa State College.

One of this man's most lovable traits was his "boyishness." In a sense, he never grew old. His passions were youth and the outdoors, and when he combined the two in what he called his "back to the boy movement," he was supremely happy. He was scoutmaster of the first Boy Scout troop organized here. Either with Scouts or Sunday school classes of boys, he "hit the trail" to river and woods for many years. His influence toward manliness and integrity upon these young lives is incalculable.

During the winter of 1924-25, his health began to fail. He became worse as the year advanced. Haunted by the fear that if he stopped his family might be reduced to want, he trudged an agonizing road. His plan was to work an hour and stop a half hour to seek surcease from fatigue and pain.

On September 25, 1925, he went to the Rochester, Minn., clinic. The doctor's diagnosis was as definite as a judge's sentence: "Cancer, incurable." In the face of this verdict, he came home, not to die, but to live if possible. His fight was no less splendid because it was futile.

For a time he became better as he recovered from the effects of an alleviative operation. He was able to walk from home to office. But the malady was inexorable. His last appearance in public was on Memorial day, when he attended services in the park. The next day he went to bed, not again to rise.

His magnificent courage, uncomplaining fortitude and unconquerable cheerfulness even in the last stages of illness astonished and sustained those around him. He made no claim to unusual bravery. He ascribed his indifference to pain and death to his Christian faith. His resistance to the ravages of the disease is regarded as remarkable. That he lived so many months beyond the time allotted to him by surgeons at Rochester is ascribed by Dr. T. N. Walsh to the care he received from his wife.

Surviving him is his 85-year-old mother, his wife, two sons, two brothers, Rolla R. of Waucoma, and Ray W. of St. Ansgar, and two sisters, Mrs. F. I. Luce of Waucoma and Miss Leona Rogers.

A devout churchman, he practiced the great humanities. His life was compounded of courageous humility, gentle morality, selfless love, a smile and a handclasp for all mankind, at its best or worst. On his tomb will be inscribed, by his own direction: "Will N. Rogers, Printer."

CARD OF THANKS

The kindnesses and sympathy of friends both near and far, not only after the death of Will N. Rogers but during the strain and uncertainty of his year's illness form for us a precious memory that time will not efface. It is impossible, of course, to enumerate these acts and words but they have done much to relieve grief and anguish and have won for those who gave so abundantly of their charity and compassion the lasting gratitude of

Mrs. Maude S. Rogers and sons
Mrs. Clara Rogers and children.

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MAUDE S. ROGERS -

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To friends and relatives:
This account of the life of Maude S. Rogers, is being sent to all those who wrote to her during her last illness, and to us after her death. It was read at memorial services in Warren, Conn., and Hawkeye, Iowa.

Maude Schrack Rogers was the daughter of western pioneers. Her parents, George and Mary Schrack, went west in the 1850s from Richland County, Ohio, to the prairies of Iowa in covered wagons.

Mrs. Rogers liked to relate the story which her mother told to her about how the travellers got fresh butter on their journey.

They drove cows with them along the rough, rutted track which passed for the western road. After the cows were milked each day, the cream would be put in covered buckets. To keep it as cool as possible, the buckets were tied under the bottoms of the high-riding wagons, as far as possible out of the sun.

Then the wagons went creaking and swaying, bouncing and tossing over the bumps of the roads and the rocks of river fords. And by nightfall the buckets were full of butter. They had been churned by the roads.

George Schrack homesteaded 640 acres in Windsor Township, Fayette County. He received the original title deed, bearing the signature of President James Buchanan.

After the house and barns were built, trees planted and fences strung, the Schrack house--for a few years the last house on the prairie westward--was a beacon for later pioneers in their covered wagons.

The family would see a prairie schooner lurch over the horizon from the east. It moved so slowly that by the time it had reached the house, Mrs. Rogers' mother would have had time to cook a meal for the newcomers.

Mrs. Rogers also recalled that when her father rode horseback over the rich, black land of his farm, the buffalo grass would rise up to the horse's shoulders.

She was born in this farm house on June 25th, 1874. She was the youngest of nine children.

By the time she was old enough to go to school, a schoolhouse had been built, and she attended this one-room school. After her father's death before she reached her teens, she herself took a "normal course", as it was called and began teaching.

In her first year or two, she taught boys and girls almost as old as herself. And some of the boys were bigger. They tried to take advantage of their girl teacher by refusing to study. But she was strong and had a firm will. By enlisting the aid of other older boys, she quelled rebellion and turmoil.

A few miles to the north of the farm, the village of Hawkeye began to straggle into existence after the railroad came through. When the first four-room brick "high school" was built, she was one of the three first

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grade teachers in it. Each teacher taught three grades.

She abandoned teaching after meeting a young printer and editor named Will N. Rogers, who had arrived in the village to edit a weekly newspaper, the Hawkeye Beacon.

They were married on June 29th, 1898. In the last year of his life, Mr. Rogers wrote an account of this wedding.

It opened with this sentence:

"The prettiest and most enjoyable wedding I ever attended was that of Maude Schrack to Will Rogers at the Hawkeye Methodist Episcopal Church, the Rev. F. H. Linn officiating.

"The bride was charming in a gown of white silk with ruching, the waist and the sleeves of the gown were shirred, the collar high and stiff, and the skirt full.

"She carried a bouquet of bride's roses and smilax. Miss Winnie Schrack of West Union, the bridesmaid, was gowned in white organdie. Little Miss Muriel Palmer, the flower girl, was dressed in white organdie and carried a basket of sweet peas.

"The groom and groomsman, Clyde Ostrander, of Fayette, were attired in black. J.J. Schrack of Elgin, brother of the bride, presented the bride to the groom.

"Messrs Fred Dibble, Reub Babcock and Sam Shales were ushers. Mrs. J. R. Gardner played the wedding march at the conclusion of the wedding ceremony. Mrs. J.E. Palmer sang, 'Oh, Promise Me.'

"The church was prettily decorated by the Wednesday Club, an organization of young ladies, with June roses and greenery. The wedding luncheon was served at the home of the bride's mother, Mrs. Mary Schrack."

The last sentence of this editor's wedding story said:

"I take pardonable pride in saying--as this is written twenty-eight years later--that they lived happily ever after."

For short periods, the young couple lived in Oelwein, Iowa, and Wells, Minnesota, where Mr. Rogers worked on newspapers. Then he bought the Hawkeye Beacon and they returned to Hawkeye in August, 1899, to live in that village for the rest of their lives.

Mrs. Rogers played the part of a pioneer as a community builder. She was a founding member of the first woman's cultural group, the History and Travel Club, and one of its presidents.

Only last year, in Warren, she received her fifty-year membership certificate from the Grand Chapter of Iowa, Order of the Eastern Star. She was a past worthy matron of the Hawkeye lodge.

She was an unfailing and hard-working member of the Hawkeye Methodist Episcopal Church and of its Ladies Aid Society. She taught Sunday School. And for years she was her husband's assistant in running the Beacon.

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After her husband's death in 1926, she was for some years secretary and substitute teacher in the Hawkeye public schools. She was librarian at the Hawkeye Public Library, which she helped to found. And during an interval before she sold the Beacon, she was its editor.

Later, after a visit with her elder son and daughter-in-law in Paris, France, and London, England, she moved to Mansfield, Ohio--the section of Ohio from which her parents had gone westward so many years earlier--to live with and help a blind niece, Ethel Seybold.

Nearly six years ago, after moving to Warren, she herself lost her sight. She also lived during later years in California, Great Neck, N.Y. and Toronto, Canada.

Mrs. Rogers' last illness began with a fall in the home of her son in Warren on May 2nd, apparently resulting from an attack of momentary unconsciousness.

She became so ill that she was taken to Sharon Hospital, where she remained until her transfer on May 29th to Tranquil House in Warren.

For her 89th birthday at Tranquil House on June 25th, her younger son, Robert, flew from Healdsburg, California.

She had improved sufficiently to have a birthday dinner in her room with Robert and Mr. and Mrs. Newell Rogers, complete with cake furnished by Tranquil House and a candle, which she blew out.

Three days later she lapsed into a state of semi-consciousness in which, except for short intervals, she lost her power of speech.

Forty-five minutes after midnight on the morning of Friday, July 12,1963, death came peacefully and--a neighbor said--"as a friend."

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